Claims

1. A method for selectively allowing or denying access to a user coupled to an electronic communications network, said user having an associated recipient identifier, comprising the steps of:

    A. generating a plurality of proxy identifiers associated with said user, each of said proxy identifiers having at least three associated security states, a first of said states being indicative of allowing any party coupled to said network access to said user, a second of said states being indicative of denying any party coupled to said network access to said user, and a third of said states being conditionally indicative of allowing at least one but fewer than all parties coupled to said network access to said user if predetermined criteria are met and denying access to said user otherwise;

    B. in response to an inbound message from said network including said sender identifier and a recipient identifier, said sender identifier being associated with the sender of said inbound message, transfer said inbound message to a location associated with one of said proxy identifiers;

    C. processing said transferred inbound message to evaluate a security status associated therewith, said security status being related to said sender identifier and said recipient identifier, and

    D. allowing access for said transferred message to said user when said security status meets one or more predetermined criteria at least partially related to said security status of said one proxy identifier, and denying access for said transferred message to said user otherwise.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said identifiers are e-mail addresses.

3. A system for selectively allowing or denying access to a user coupled to an electronic communications network, said user having an associated recipient identifier, comprising the steps of:

A.   a generator for generating a plurality of proxy identifiers associated with said user, each of said proxy identifiers having at least three associated security states, a first of said states being indicative of allowing any party coupled to said network access to said user, a second of said states being indicative of denying any party coupled to said network access to said user, and a third of said states being conditionally indicative of allowing at least one but fewer than all parties coupled to said network access to said user if predetermined criteria are met and denying access to said user otherwise;

B.   a message transferor responsive to an inbound message from said network including said sender identifier and a recipient identifier, said sender identifier being associated with the sender of said inbound message, to transfer said inbound message to a location associated with one of said proxy identifiers;

C.   a processor for evaluating a security status associated with said security status being related to said sender identifier and said recipient identifier, and

D.   a gate for allowing access for said transferred message to said user when said security status meets one or more predetermined criteria at least partially related to said security states of said one proxy identifier, and denying access for said transferred message to said user otherwise.

4.   The system of claim 3 wherein said identifiers are e-mail addresses.